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Healthcare Utilization of Subgroups of Latinas: Shortfalls in Data Interpretation

Carlos J. Crespo, DrPH, FACSM¹

IFOUND THE ARTICLE BY Ai et al.¹ to have the potential to contribute significantly to our understanding about the overall health and healthcare utilization of Latinos in the United States. The findings advance the field by using a well-described survey of Latinos who participated in the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) to cross-sectionally identify differences among Cuban Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latinos. The authors provided an insightful discussion about potential explanations for the differences between subgroups of Latinos in the United States and potential variability according to place of birth. The investigators stated that this study may be among the first of its kind to present differences among major ethnic subgroups of Latino American women with respect to chronic conditions, and behavioral and mental health, using data from the first nationally representative sample of Latinos in the United States. While the authors acknowledge the limitation of self-reported data, they failed to recognize earlier and multiple findings from the Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey with a significantly larger sample size and more objective data points of the major three groups of Latinos in the United States than the NLAAS.

In addition, all Puerto Ricans, regardless of place of birth, are Americans. Even in Hispanic Health and Nutrition

Examination Survey, the three main groups studied and reported on were: Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans (not Puerto Rican Americans). This is a critical element for your readers and other researchers who will do research among Latino subgroups [should] understand.

Disclosure Statement

No competing financial interests exist.

Reference

1. Ai AL, Appel HB, Huang B, Lee, K. Overall health and healthcare utilization among Latino American women in the United States. *J Womens Health*. 2012;21:878–885.

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